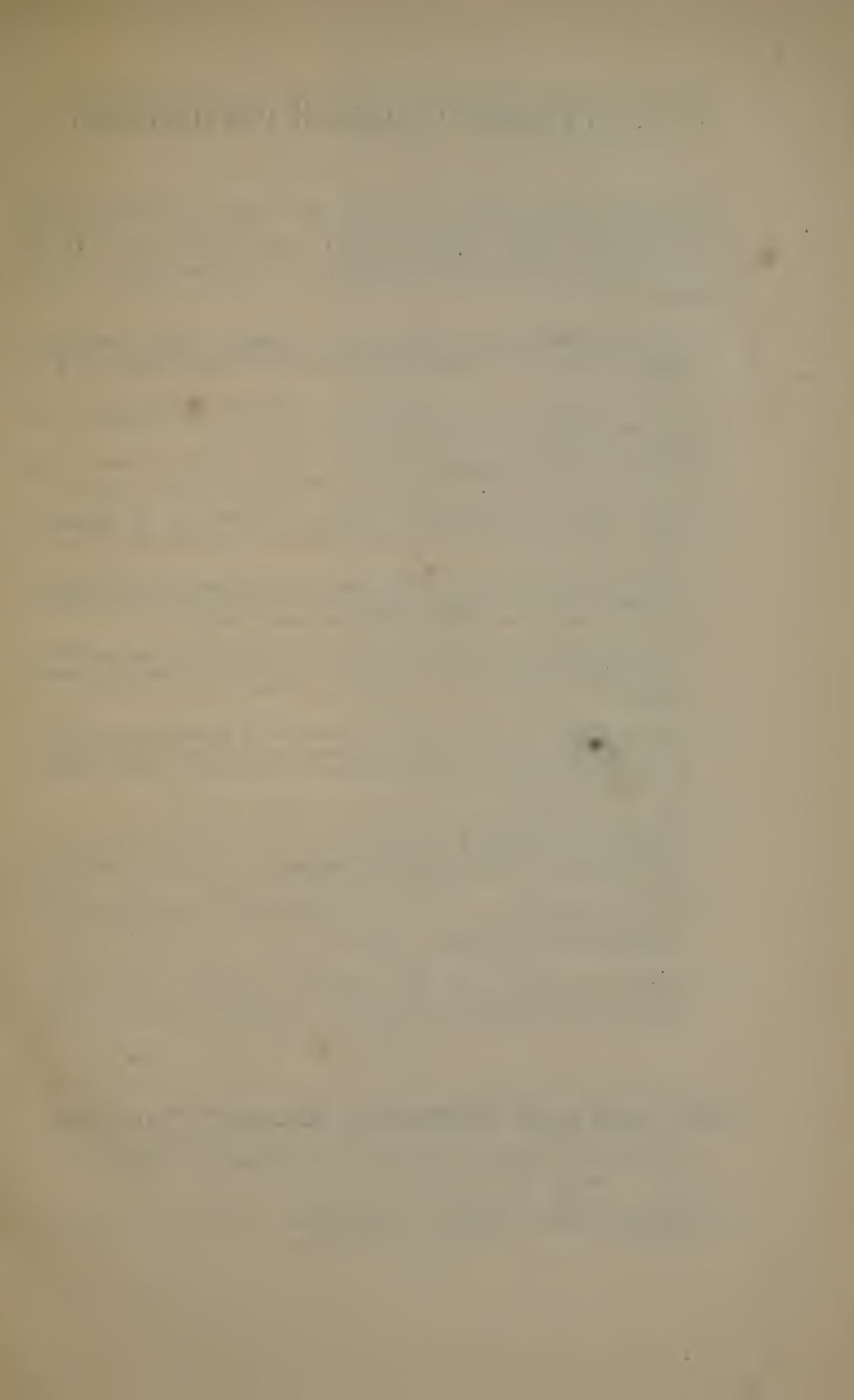




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THE POWER OF THE BISHOPS
TO
LICENSE LAYMEN TO PREACH AND
READ PRAYERS.

33

The power of the Bishops to license Laymen
to preach and read prayers.

A LETTER

TO HIS GRACE

THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY

IN ELUCIDATION OF THE REPORT OF THE

JOINT COMMITTEE OF THE CONVOCATION OF
CANTERBURY

No. 383

ON "READERS AND SUB-DEACONS"

BY

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Bishop of Salisbury

CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE

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NOTE.—The Report on "Readers and Sub-deacons" no. 383 (60 pages 8vo.) may be bought for 6d. at the National Society's Depository, Westminster.

PALACE, SALISBURY,

Feast of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple,

2 Feb., 1905.

MY DEAR ARCHBISHOP,

1. *Occasion of this Letter. Present position of the discussion on "Readers and Sub-deacons."*

I think it may be well for me to take the opportunity of the summons which I have received to attend a fresh meeting of our Convocation, to write to your Grace on the subject of the Report of the Joint Committee on *Readers and Sub-Deacons* (No. 383), which was presented to and received by our Convocation last year. I do this entirely on my own responsibility, but, having been Chairman of that Committee, and therefore fully acquainted with the course of business that came before it, I think that I may be able to add some fresh information and to reply to some of the criticisms which have since come under my notice in that capacity. I hope that by so doing I may facilitate the further discussion of the important subject which is treated in the Report, when our Resolutions come up for final consideration. I may, for the sake of convenience, remind your Grace that the terms of the reference to our Committee were "to consider the question of restoring an Order of Readers or Sub-Deacons in the Church, and with power to confer with any similar Committee of the Convocation of York, and with the Houses of Laymen." We reported, after such Conference, on 2nd May, 1904. The Report was "received" by the Upper House of our Convocation on 3rd May, and was sent down to the Lower House for their information. On the 5th May the Report was presented and explained to the Lower House. On 5th July the Resolutions appended to the Report were considered by that House, and a series of 10 Resolutions, very nearly in the terms of those proposed by the Committee, was agreed to. These have now been circulated with the Report and will, I presume, take the place of the original Resolutions when the subject is brought before us in the Upper House this year. They will be found below p. 20.

I may add that the Report was also presented to and received by the joint meeting of the Provincial Houses of Laymen on Wednesday, 6th July, but no further Resolutions were proposed. It seems that no record of the speeches delivered at this meeting has been preserved except in the *Guardian* of the following week, 13th July, p. 1177. I understand, however, that minutes of the meeting were kept, and that the "reception" of the Report at the joint meeting will practically carry its reception by the separate Lay Houses. It would no doubt be a gain if the proceedings of the Houses of Laymen could be more fully reported, and, further, if the business done by them could be brought into more definite relation with the business of Convocation. I am sure that it must be an anxious task to your Grace and the Archbishop of York so to arrange the consultation of all our deliberative bodies, that they may help and not hinder the despatch of business.

I am, therefore, rejoiced to hear that your Grace has directed that the Resolutions of the Lower House on "Readers and Sub-deacons" should be considered by our House of Laymen on Wednesday 15th inst., and I hope that similar action may be taken in the Northern Province. It may thus, I trust, be possible that the Houses of Bishops may discuss the Resolutions in May, and the mature result be brought before the Representative Church Council in July.

2. General purport of the Report and Resolutions and how they may be dealt with by the consultative bodies of the Church. Action by R.C.C. may be followed by joint episcopal action.

The Report dealt largely with historical and legal considerations, and only indicated in general terms the reasons which led to the discussion. These reasons may be found at length in previous debates and reports of our two Convocations, to which reference has been made in the first chapter of our Report, pp. 4—10. Discussions of considerable fulness began as early as 1857, and have gone on from time to time ever since. We thought that it was quite needless to repeat them: but we summarised their purport in a paragraph on p. 3 as follows:—

"It is unnecessary to enlarge upon the practical needs which have led to the appointment of this Committee, the rapid growth of population in some quarters and its rapid diminution in others, the difficulty of one incumbent serving

two churches, as is often necessary in rural districts, the difficulty of providing stipends for priests and deacons, the diminution of the number of candidates for holy orders, especially of candidates possessed of anything like large private incomes. These and other causes make it not only desirable but necessary to use the services of qualified laymen to co-operate with and supplement the work of the clergy. But over and above these practical needs there is felt to be the call to increase the fulness of life in the Church, to recognise and develop the spiritual gifts of many of her members who are not called to holy orders, and to sanctify society more thoroughly by increasing the sense of responsibility for and of fellowship in our divine Master's work."

We point out on the same page that our object is to answer two questions:—

(1) The one definitely referred to us: "Is it desirable to restore any of the minor Orders?" To this our answer is, "Not under present circumstances." For the reasons for this conclusion see particularly Report, ch. iv. p. 40—1 and ch. v. p. 50.

(2) "What functions as to preaching and the conduct of services may be assigned to men not in 'holy orders'?" To this we return a general answer that, "Setting aside legal difficulties and looking only to principle and expediency, Laymen [of course with proper license and authority] may both preach and read specified and duly authorised parts of Morning and Evening Prayer and Litany in consecrated buildings without infringing the due order of the Church;" and we state our opinion that services in unconsecrated buildings should be more strictly regulated (ib. p. 51).

As to *preaching*, we think that licence should be given with great caution, and assent to the XXXIX. Articles should be required very much in the form in which it is required of clergy (p. 51), and licence given after examination, and generally to men of some diocesan standing (ib). Further, that "no lay officer should preach during the communion service or from the pulpit" (p. 52).

As regards *reading portions of divine service* we point out the importance of permitting this in country parishes where there are two or more consecrated Churches and only one Priest—a condition of things which exists very largely in this rural Diocese for one. We have 56 Cures with 125 Churches in them, in very few of which there is more than

one Priest, in which it is impossible, or all but impossible, for two services to be held in each of two or more Churches every Sunday. I may quote the following words from our Report as putting the matter with sufficient, but by no means too great, emphasis :—

“As regards *reading portions of divine service*, we feel that the great practical need for this arises in country parishes where two or more churches are held by one incumbent. Under the present conditions of the movement of population and the diminution of clerical incomes, we foresee that such cases are likely to grow more frequent and the difficulty of meeting them with our present resources more serious. For the temper of our country people makes them cling persistently to their own buildings and their own immediate surroundings. If a Church in a hamlet is shut, they will often cease to attend public worship at all, or go to a nonconformist chapel, rather than attend another Church than their own. It is therefore important that, while an incumbent is engaged in one of his churches, Morning or Evening Prayer, or such other services as a Reader may take, should be said in the other. We may refer to the principles on this point enunciated in the Dioceses of Nassau and of Western New York (pp. 33 and 37).”

The Resolutions appended to the Report put the substance of these conclusions in orderly form, and with more detail, but if they are, as I hope they will be, adopted (with whatever amendment may be thought necessary) by the Representative Church Council in July, something more will be needed to put the scheme into working order. I hope that the perception of this obvious fact may lead the Council to request the two Archbishops to summon the Diocesan Bishops for the purpose of drafting a final Constitution, on the basis of the Resolutions. Our action as Bishops in this matter would then be a parallel to, and a natural continuation of, the action of the Bishops on Ascension Day, 10th May, 1866, which was the basis of the whole movement. See Report, pp. 5 and 6. It would also be a parallel to the action of Archbishop Parker and the Elizabethan Bishops in 1560—1563. See Report, pp. 22, 23. I presume that the Constitution thus drafted by the Bishops would be promulgated in Convocation in the early months of 1906. I do not myself think that either a Canon or an Act of Parliament is necessary ; and I shall presently explain why.

3. *Criticisms on the Report and fresh information. Other instances of Lay preachers. Bellarmine, Taverner, &c.*

A certain amount of criticism has been directed to the Report in various quarters, and particularly in the debate in the Joint Meeting of the Houses of Laymen (6th May, 1904), to which I have referred. I have also received some private comments. In the first place I must name the criticism which expresses the general regret and disappointment of certain Lay-workers, that we did not see our way to report in favour of granting them fuller legal recognition as an Order. I believe that anyone who really studies our Report will agree that it was practically impossible under present circumstances to do so. Members of the Committee naturally feel great sympathy with those who have worked hard and self-denyingly for the Church in the different offices concerned. They are glad that they should receive all the benefits which may accrue to them from recognition of their status, and cautious extension of their powers, but I think that no member of our Committee thought it prudent to propose the legislation which would apparently be necessary if the minor orders were to be re-established, as necessary steps in the Ministry. R. 40, 41.

As regards the details of our Report, I have to notice particularly the criticism to which we have been subjected for omitting to refer to the XXIIIrd Article of Religion, by the Dean of Arches in the Joint Meeting already referred to. His speech, as he has kindly informed me, is very imperfectly reported in the *Guardian* (13th July, 1904, p. 1177), but this point in it is clear, and it was evidently regarded by him as of great importance. He also referred to our failure to notice that part of the Caroline Act of Uniformity had been repealed by the Clerical Subscription Act, 1865, and he implied that certain of the rubrics in the different Prayer-books in which various prayers are ordered to be read by a "Priest" or "Minister" had been misconstrued.

Criticism of this sort, especially from so kind and ever-helpful a friend as the Dean of Arches, deserves the most careful consideration. I shall endeavour to reply to it in the following sections of this letter.

As to fresh information, most of it concerns the second branch of the subject, the right of licensing laymen to read public prayers. The subject of preaching, which stands first in our Report (though second in the Resolutions), has not

received much new light as far as I am informed. A learned correspondent (Rev. J. N. Figgis) does, however, mention that it appears from Cardinal Bellarmine's *Autobiography* that he preached for seven years "prima sua tonsura," i.e., as a simple clerk not in any of the minor Orders. This illustrates the permission granted to Jesuits in the Roman Church, about which we give some details in chap. iv. p. 43, of our Report. The only definite parallel instance with which I am acquainted in England is the licence given by King Edward VI. to a layman, Richard Taverner, the translator of the Bible, dated 13th May, 1552. Taverner also preached at St. Mary's, Oxford, and elsewhere, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. He died in 1575.¹ Wood speaks also of Wm. Holcot, of Buckland, Berks, as a lay-preacher (*Ath.* i. 395, 420), and mentions Sir T. More's lectures at S. Lawrence, Jewry. Besides these cases I find little more than general statements that lay preaching was sometimes officially permitted, and a rather remarkable difference between the form of privilege to license preachers granted by Queen Elizabeth to the University of Cambridge, dated 26th April, 1561, and the form of licence previously issued by Bishop Fisher as Chancellor, 31st May, 1522.² Fisher recites a Bull of Alexander VI., dated 2nd May, 1503, which mentions men "in Presbyteratus ordine constitutos." Queen Elizabeth's privilege grants "auctoritatem et facultatem eligendi et emittendi singulis annis duodecim Doctores, Magistros, sive Graduatos, ad praedicandi officium idoneos, . . . per totum regnum nostrum Anglie et Hibernie" without such restriction. It may, however, be implied in the

¹ See Cooper's *Athenae Cantab.* 1, 339; 1858, and Wood *Athenae* ed. Bliss i. 419 foll. Taverner became High Sheriff of Oxfordshire and was never ordained. Cp. for a general statement Neal's *H. of the Puritans* 2, 495 ed. 1837, quoted by E. H. Plumptre *The Functions of Lay Readers* in the *Guardian* of 5 March, 1884, p. 355.

² These documents are Nos. XXXV. and XXXVIII. in the Appendix to Strype's *Parker*. The licence given to George Withers, of Corpus Christi College, in the same University, dated 5th November, 1563, is also there as No. XXXVI., though this does not seem to be noticed by those who write about Withers. He became notorious for his Puritan conduct in 1565: see Robert Masters' *Hist. of C.C.C.C.*, p. 416-7, Camb., 1753, and J. B. Mullinger's *Univ. of Camb. from the Royal Injunctions of 1535 to 1625*, p. 196-7, Camb., 1884. He is only called "Master of Arts" in the licence, as Wood says Taverner was (*Athenae* ed. Bliss i. 420), and it is worth enquiring whether he was then in holy orders or not. Mullinger speaks of him "finally as settling down as a quiet parish priest."

general words relating to previous custom and privilege. The words "eligendi et emittendi" are, as your Grace will observe, close to those of Article XXIII., which speaks of the "potestas vocandi ministros atque mittendi in vineam Domini," on which I shall presently comment.

4. *Power of licensing laymen to preach. Sir Arthur Charles' opinion, the XXIIIrd Article and other documents. The power inherent in the Episcopate and never taken away.*

It would perhaps have been better if we had given the text of Sir Arthur Charles' "opinion," though it has no more weight than the opinion of any other good lawyer, given 20 years ago, on a subject on which information has since been increased. We refer to both its parts on p. 48, but I give the whole of it here as a sort of basis for further discussion.

It runs as follows:—

"Whilst I think that having regard to the Twenty-third Article of Religion, the canons of 1604, and the Preface to the Form of Making, Ordaining and Consecrating Bishops, Priests and Deacons, laymen cannot lawfully publicly preach or minister the Sacraments, I am of opinion that they may lawfully, in a consecrated building, say the Litany or any other part of Morning or Evening Prayer which is not expressly directed to be said by a priest, provided they are authorised so to do by the incumbent and Bishop. It is true that the word 'minister' undoubtedly means ordained minister (Kemp v. Wickes, 3 Phillimore 276; Escott v. Mastin, 4 Moore P.C. 104, 2 Curteis 692) and that the rubrics in many cases expressly direct that the 'minister' shall say this or that particular portion of the service, but these rubrics are, in my opinion, directory only, and do not exclude properly authorised laymen from saying such portions as well as those portions where there is no express rubrical direction."³

"4, PAPER-BUILDINGS, TEMPLE.

ARTHUR CHARLES.

"February 27, 1884."

Stress is here laid, as by Sir Lewis Dibdin, on the XXIIIrd Article, which, I need not say, was considered by the Committee. But we did not think that it could reasonably bear

³ This *Opinion* was published in the *Guardian* of March 5, 1884, p. 347, and is quoted in full in the Bp. of Southwark's useful handbook *Lay Work and the Office of Reader* p. 63—4, 1904. The *Guardian* notice, there copied, has one or two obvious misprints (e.g., "Kemp Wickes" for "Kemp v. Wickes" and "Escott v. Martin" for "Escott v. Mastin") which I have corrected in the text.

the stress laid upon it, or in fact really touched the subject ; and I was glad to see that Colonel Everitt very properly defended the Committee on this point in the debate.

The text of the Article is unaltered since 1553, but the title dates from 1571. The whole runs thus :—

“XXIII. *Of Ministering in the Congregation.* It is not lawful for any man to take upon him the office of publick preaching, or ministering the Sacraments in the Congregation, before he be lawfully called and sent to execute the same. And those we ought to judge lawfully called and sent, which be chosen and called to this work by men who have publick authority given unto them in the Congregation, to call and send Ministers into the Lord’s vineyard.”

The Article, though derived from one (No. 10 of the 13 Articles of 1538) which dealt firstly with Ordination, has become one which deals mainly with mission and license. If the main subject were ordination the words used would have been “called, *ordered* and sent,” or “called, *admitted* and sent.” The subject of ordination is treated more clearly in Article XXXVI. It is then the “*potestas jurisdictionis*” which is in question, rather than the “*potestas ordinis*,” on which distinction see our Report p. 44. What the Article asserts is that institution or licence to minister publicly belongs to some superior jurisdiction, and that ministry in a particular place is not a thing which a man can take upon himself. It is well known that such power of jurisdiction was claimed and exercised by the Crown,⁴ often on a large scale, in the 16th century, that power of licensing to preach, is, according to canon 36 of 1604, possessed also by the two Universities, and that power to institute and license has often been delegated to Bishop’s officials. It is for this reason, I presume, rather than from tenderness to foreign Protestants, that the indirect expression is used about “men who have publick authority given to them in the Congregation,” instead of saying “the Bishops of the Church.” I have (p. 9) already pointed out the parallel to the language of the privilege granted by Queen Elizabeth to the University of Cambridge.

⁴ *E.g.* in the Proclamation given by Strype *Memorials*, Burnet, and Cardwell *Doc. Annals* 1, 42, which should be dated 6 Feb., 1548, which speaks of “Private curates, preachers, and other laymen” innovating, and forbids any to preach without licence of the King, his Visitors, the Archbishop of Canterbury or the Bishop of the Diocese. Cp. no. 4 of Parker’s *Articles* 1559, Cardwell 1, 264—5.

This being the case, the import of the Article is to affirm strongly the rights of Church order against unauthorised intrusion into congregations on the part of men otherwise (presumably) qualified to minister the Sacraments or to preach. It does not define their qualifications, except by implication, *i.e.*, by calling them Ministers, and by the heading of the article, "Of Ministering in the Congregation." Even if we held with Sir Arthur Charles that "Minister" meant "ordained Minister" wherever it occurs in the Prayer-book and Articles—as he seems to imply—it would not be necessarily an exclusive word here. Supposing the Article were rightly paraphrased: "No one can minister publicly except he be called and sent by men who have jurisdiction to license and place the clergy," the latter clause would be a natural description of the general and most eminent power of such a jurisdiction, since in any case far and away the greatest number of those called and sent to preach would be ordained Ministers; but it would be nothing else. When the Articles were finally revised in 1571 possibly no others were in view, though Taverner was still preaching, and his case probably did not stand alone. But a description of that kind, mentioning the highest range of a power, could not tacitly abolish and annul a lower range of power otherwise known to exist. The transient use of the word "Ministers" in this connection certainly could not destroy a power of jurisdiction inherent in the episcopal office such as we hold the licensing of lay theologians to be. In our Report, however, we hold, and I think rightly, that Minister is a word of more general signification, see p. 48. We consider that, as the Bishops said at the Savoy Conference,—in reply to the Ministers who wished to introduce the word "Minister" everywhere where "Priest" or "Curate" occurs in the Prayer-book,—this term "signifies at large everyone that ministers in that holy office of what order soever he be" (*Answer of the Bishops to the exceptions of the Ministers*, prop. 11, *Cardwell Conferences*, p. 342, ed. 3, 1849). Wherever, then, they retained the word "Minister" they must have meant it to imply something more extensive than "Priest." The Bishops indeed only mention Deacons as further included in the word. But the Prayer-book supplies at least one instance in which it clearly may include an unordained officer of the Church. This is one of the rubrics about the first Lesson: "Note. *That before every Lesson the Minister shall say* Here beginneth such a

Chapter, &c.” This note, I may remark, was introduced in 1604. No one doubts that the lesson may be read by a duly authorised layman.

There is nothing again in the Preface to the Forms of Ordination to imply that the three Orders of Ministers there enumerated are the only Ministers known to the Church, and that the word is used in an exclusive sense. It is clear that when that Preface was issued in 1549—50 the word Minister was still used in the larger sense, because the Act just passed (3 and 4 Edward VI. c. 12) authorised the setting forth of a “form and manner of making and consecrating of archbishops, bishops, priests and deacons and other ministers of the Church” (Report p. 40—1). The fact that only Bishops, Priests and Deacons were actually provided for, does not show that the word Minister was wrongly used in the Act or exclusively in the Preface, or that no other class of Ministers was to exist, but that it was not intended then to *ordain* any but the three classes named.

As regards Canon 56 of 1604, we have dealt with it rather fully, and I think satisfactorily, on p. 45. I venture, therefore, to refer to that. We also devoted a certain amount of argument to the Caroline Act of Uniformity, 1662, which prescribes that every one who preaches in Church shall at the first time he officiates read the service “appointed to be read for the time of day” (R. pp. 46—7). We speak of the provisions of this Act as “being still in force, except as modified by the Act of Uniformity Amendment Act, 1872, the Clerical Subscription Act, 1865, and Canon 36 of the same year” (p. 47). It would have been more correct to say that great part of Section 15 of the Caroline Act (as numbered in the *Statutes Revised*), including the provision about reading the service for the time of day, was repealed by the Clerical Subscription Act of 1865, 28 and 29 Vic. c. 122 s. 15; and for this correction we have to thank Sir Lewis Dibdin. Yet it would be scarcely right to maintain, as has been suggested to me, that the Act of Uniformity Amendment Act, 1872, had nothing to do with the matter, since in § 6 it refers to doubts which have arisen “as to whether a sermon or lecture could be preached without the common prayers and services appointed by the Book of Common Prayer for the time of day being previously read, and it is expedient to remove such doubts,” &c. I cannot help thinking that this clause, especially in the words “appointed . . . for the time of day,” is a reference to Section 15 of the Caroline Act.

The argument on these points is somewhat tedious and minute, but I hope your Grace will have patience with it. The strength of our argument cannot, however, simply be judged by our success in interpreting enactments called forth by a very different condition of Church life from that which at present exists. They were directed against a disloyal body of persons, mostly, if not entirely, claiming some sort of ordination, who were being thrust into lectureships in order to draw people away from the regular ministry of the Incumbents. We have to deal with most loyal fellow-workers wishing to help our Incumbents. The real strength of our argument lies in the proof given, I venture to think, almost for the first time in this country, that from the thirteenth century onwards, in the Western Church, up to and into the sixteenth century, the power to license Preachers was possessed by the Bishops, whether the Preachers were ordained or not, provided, at any rate, they had the very simple and easily acquired status of clerks. This important power has never been taken away from our Bishops; and it could not, I venture to think, be taken away except by such express words as we find in the Constitution or Article of 1575-6 (R. p. 44-5), which never became the law of the Church. It is our duty as Bishops to claim all powers that rightly belong to us, and to hand them on intact to our successors in office. This is why I say that no Act of Parliament or Canon is necessary to enable us to use the power. At the same time the unity of the country, and general considerations of wisdom and discretion, impel us to act, after consultation with the clergy and laity of the Church, rather than *proprio motu*, and to embody our united policy in a Resolution or Constitution of the whole body of Bishops, which would be directive to ourselves and our successors.

There is also, I think, much to be said in favour of the policy, on which we have hitherto acted, of making such changes by administrative power, rather than by legislation in the form of Act of Parliament or Canon. We might conceivably obtain the necessary power for a change, but it would be difficult, considering the cumbrous nature of the processes involved, to retrace our steps if we found afterwards that we had made a mistake. It was, I venture to think, an ordering of God's Providence, in the cause of ecclesiastical freedom, that the draft Canon of 1571, as regards Readers, and the Constitution of 1575-6, as regards Preachers, never

received the formal Royal assent. The freedom which I believe we now enjoy would be much more difficult to claim if they had been so ratified.

5. Caution to be used in exercising this power and reasons for wishing to use it.

I am, personally, not at all anxious to see our Churches constantly opened to the preaching of laymen. I also hope that any scheme regulating their employment will be cautious as to the time and place of their ministry. This is one of our recommendations, to which I wish to draw attention (R. p. 52):—"We think that no lay officer should preach during the communion service or from the pulpit. The latter represents the cathedra or locus magisterii, though placed for convenience outside the sanctuary. It belongs to the bishop and his colleagues of the presbytery, and is only conceded to deacons by custom." But I cannot doubt that the Spirit of God, which has moved some laymen to devote themselves to the office of preaching as their work in life, as we all acknowledge in regard to the Church Army and certain Evangelist Brotherhoods, has a message for their mouths which may well be delivered in Church. They have affinities both with the preaching Friars and with the Puritan preachers of the 16th and 17th centuries, but they have (unless I am mistaken) more of the spirit of discipline than either. They are fellow-helpers to our clergy, not their rivals and supplanters. They deserve the encouragement and recognition, they will be better for the sense of responsibility and concentration of thought, which an invitation to preach inside our churches will give them. This is especially the case in Parochial Missions. There are others who do not belong to such brotherhoods, who are specially trained to advocate the causes of foreign missions, or of temperance and purity, or of some special social or religious movement, to whom from time to time a Bishop may well wish to give authority to preach. There are cases where an aged or infirm Incumbent and his people may sometimes benefit by such addresses from less professional preachers; though I should generally prefer that in such cases selected homilies of our accredited orthodox divines were used.

On the whole I am persuaded that the present impulse to encourage the enthusiasm of those who have the gift of preaching, and yet not the gift of ruling or administration,

comes from God. That the Church of England has grievously suffered from its inability to use such enthusiasm in years gone by is clear. We now have an opportunity and ought to use it, and, indeed, cannot fail to use it.

6. *Power of licensing Laymen to read prayers in Church. Fresh information. Readers in Scotland 1561—1581. Readers employed in the Lake District up to 1744. Rubrics.*

Sir Arthur Charles' opinion, as we have seen, is in favour of the existence of this power, and the action of Bishops in the first half of the reign of Queen Elizabeth is a remarkable precedent for it, even though the circumstances of the time were peculiar, and the need of a less regular ministry extraordinary. Our argument in the Report is that the power then exercised by the Elizabethan Bishops has never been taken from the Order of Bishops, and that, though the circumstances of our times do not constitute so general an emergency, yet the condition of many cures, with two or more consecrated Churches and only one ordained Minister, is so peculiar as to make the exercise of this power to license lay Readers, under proper safeguards, very expedient.

As regards fresh information, two facts have recently been brought to my knowledge, both of which are of interest. The first is that such Readers were introduced into the Church of Scotland just about the same time as they were in England, as may be seen in the Section *For Readers* in the *First* (Knox's) *Book of Discipline*, 1560—61. The experiment was apparently not very successful, for the office was abolished in the Kirk in 1581, as may be seen from the *Act of the General Assembly* of that year (Maitland Club) I. 513: "The Kirk . . . hes (*sic*) votit . . . that in no tyme comeing any Reider be admitted to the office of Reidar, be any having power within the Kirk."⁵ The same change is implied in Melville's *Second Book of Discipline* ch. 2 § 9—11 adopted by the General Assembly in the same year. Thus the formal institution and the formal abolition of the office in Scotland synchronize very nearly with what our Report has laid down as the beginning and end of the period of the general employment of Readers in England, the period from 1560 to 1583, that is practically the two Archiepisco-

⁵ I owe this reference to Mr. W. A. Craigie, who has kindly put at my disposal the material collected for the article *Reader* in Murray's great *English Dictionary*.

pates of your Grace's predecessors Matthew Parker and Edmund Grindal (Report pp. 22—26). But, whereas in Scotland the office was abolished by competent authority, it was not so in England. The draft canons of 1571 (whatever their meaning) were never ratified by Royal authority, and, as we have shewn, the employment of Readers went on for ten years or more after that date. The employment was dropped in the time of Archbishop Whitgift, as a matter of general policy, by the Bishops, but the office was not abolished, and, as I shall proceed to show, did not wholly go out of use.

This difference between Scotland and England accounts for the other fact which ought to have been known to our Committee but unfortunately was not. This fact is, to use the language of the Bishop (Ware) of Barrow-in-Furness, that the practice of licensing lay-readers to read public prayers and homilies was continued, by the Bishops of Carlisle and Chester, in the chapelries of the Lake District, during a great part of the 18th century.⁶

We ought, I think, to have known this in general outline, since it is mentioned both in Robert Southey's *Colloquies* vol. II. p. 66 (1829) and in the late Chancellor Ferguson's *History of the Diocese of Carlisle* p. 173.⁷ But we should not have had the detailed information, for which we must be grateful to the Bishop of Barrow, which not only fully substantiates the fact from the Registers of the Dioceses of Carlisle and Chester (which latter then included Furness and other parts of the Lake District), but explains the reason for the cessation of the employment of Readers. He tells us also that the Readers who served the chapelries in question were often, but not always, the Schoolmasters, and that the question whether the Chapel, to which a man was licensed, was or was not consecrated, does not seem to have been considered.

He thinks, however, that there was a distinction between "chapelries" and "parochial chapelries." The latter were as a rule served by ordained clergy, though it was often the case that a man was first licensed to one of them as an unordained Reader and then in a year or so ordained Deacon.

⁶ *On the Readers in the Chapelries of the Lake District*, paper in the Cumberland and Westmoreland Antiquarian and Archæological Society's *Transactions*, vol. v., p. 90, N.S. 1905.

⁷ The Bishop refers to Mr. J. C. Hodgson's *History of Northumberland*, vol. iv., pp., 79, 80, as having led him to the quotation from Southey.

Simple chapelries were in the earlier half of the 18th century often served by Readers apparently for longer periods. A Reader at Allendale, in the county of Northumberland, is also mentioned by Mr. J. C. Hodgson in 1662 and 1664.⁸

The reason given by the Bishop of Barrow for the cessation of the employment of Readers in this district is that an effort was made in the first half of the 18th century, and especially in the episcopate of Sir George Fleming (1734 to 1747) to get these chapelries augmented by the Governors of Queen Anne's Bounty, and that by this augmentation they became *ipso facto* perpetual curacies, to which Incumbents had to be instituted. This was the effect of the Act of I. George I. c 10, §§ 4, 5, an Act of the effects of which my own predecessor was once unexpectedly made aware, as I doubt not other Bishops likewise have been from time to time. There seems, however, no reason to doubt the general assertion of Chancellor Ferguson that "in the time of George II. the Bishops (of Carlisle and Chester) came to a resolution that no one should officiate who was not in deacon's orders," if it is understood in this sense that it was their policy to promote such augmentations with a view to providing sufficient stipends for ordained clergy. As far as I can see the latest instance of the licence of an unordained Reader, given by the Bishop of Barrow, is that of William Taylor, literate, who was licensed as Reader at Allhallows November 14th, 1743, but was ordained Deacon May 20th, 1744. The year 1744 may then be fixed approximately as the time when the office went out of use in the Lake District.

Your Grace will, I think, agree with me that the additional light thus thrown upon the work of Readers, licensed to read prayers and homilies in church, tends strongly to confirm the opinion of our Committee in favour of the legality of such a proceeding. The payments made to the parish clerks of St. Martin's and St. Edmund's in this city, for reading public prayers on week-days, extend in the first case up to 1642, and in the second up to 1650. Some of the cases mentioned by Bishop Ware begin about that time, so that there is almost continuous evidence of the employment of unordained persons in this work, though from different parts of the country, from 1560 up to 1744. We may not improbably suppose that this evidence could be increased by more careful research directed

⁸ See preceding note.

to episcopal registers and churchwardens' accounts, especially in districts where parochial areas were large and the population thin and scattered. I conclude, therefore, that as far as history is concerned, it is right to affirm that a Bishop may now do, as many Bishops have done in the past, viz., license properly-qualified laymen to read most of Morning and Evening Prayer, omitting the Absolution, and the Litany down to the Lord's Prayer.

The detailed criticisms which have been forwarded to me touching certain statements as to rubrics, &c., in our Report do not affect the general conclusion, but only the method of framing a convenient scheme in which what is to be said by a "Minister" may be separated from what is to be said by a "Priest." Taking our present Prayer-book, it is said that the Confession and the first Lord's Prayer, though directed to be said by the "Minister" (as stated R. p. 49) must, according to rubric, be said by a "Priest." For after the Lord's Prayer comes *Then likewise he shall say*, and then a set of versicles and responses, the versicles of which, in the second case, are assigned to a "Priest." The argument is "Minister = he = Priest, therefore the Minister must be a Priest." But this backward inference is surely not imperative, if interpreted as making Minister an exclusive word. The Priest who says the versicles is certainly a Minister, but the Minister who says the Lord's Prayer is not necessarily a Priest. V. s. p. 11. I think this a better argument than that which first occurred to me, viz., that the Bishops of the Savoy Conference who introduced "Priest" before the Absolution, did not alter the versicle to Minister, as they might reasonably have done, because they would not give way to the Puritans. See Cardwell *Conferences*, p. 342. I think that this is true, but that the first argument is not only simpler but truer.

We have also been criticised for an inaccuracy in regard to the rubrics of the first Prayer-book of Edward VI. (referred to R. p. 48), where the rubric before the three Collects begins impersonally: "*Then shall daily follow three Collects.*" . . . but ends: "*the Priest standing up and saying, Let us pray. Then the Collect of the day,*" &c. It may be said in reply that these Collects could be said by a Minister kneeling, but only by a Priest standing. And no doubt standing is a sign of priestly authority, as in the Absolution. This is illustrated by Bishop Andrewes' note on the Absolution: "And because he speaks it *authoritative*, in the name of Christ and His

Church, he must not kneel but stand up," &c. (*Minor Works* ed. A.C.L. p. 147-8, 1854).

But, even supposing the probable interpretation to be the other way, the present Prayer-book offers no difficulty on this point. For the mention of "*the Priest standing up and saying, Let us pray*" before the Collects, is omitted, and the rubric is purely impersonal, ending : "*all kneeling.*"

We can therefore frame a good scheme of Morning and Evening Prayer, for use by a lay Reader, by omitting the sets of versicles and reponses before the Psalms, and before the three Collects, the versicles of which in both cases are directed to be said by a "Priest"—and this, I suppose, was Sir Arthur Charles' intention.

Nevertheless, I cannot but notice that the licences given in the Lake district seem only to have specified the omission of the Absolution, no doubt, as being a definitely priestly act apart from any rubric.⁹ The word Priest in the sets of versicles must have been held by the Bishops of Carlisle and Chester to be only directory, that is to say, as applying only when a Priest was present, just as we might extend Sir Arthur Charles' remark as regards the use of Minister to another case. See his *Opinion*, above p. 9.

7. *Conclusion.* I shall hope to have other opportunities of speaking on this subject, but I was anxious to have something in type, which, with your Grace's permission, I might put into the hands of members of the Houses of Laymen before they meet in the middle of this month. I thank you for your kind permission to this effect, and I will at once proceed to circulate this Letter. I add the Resolutions agreed to by the Lower House on 5th July, 1904, for convenience of reference.

I am, always,

Your Grace's affectionate suffragan,

JOHN SARUM.

⁹ 'For Langdale in Grasmere parish in 1691 "Gulielmus Sawrey, lector, exhibuit facultatem ad legendum preces publicas (Absolutione excepta)" dated 1671,' Bp. of Barrow's paper, p. 103—4, and in the same year 1691 in the Diocese of Chester (as I learn by the kindness of Mr. Gamon), "Neither Washdale parochiae Stae. Begae.—Nicolaus Dixon exhibuit facultatem ad exequendum officium Lectoris in precibus publicis (absolucione semper exceptâ) legendis per Tobiam Wickham, &c., ultimo Augusti 1686.'

RESOLUTIONS AGREED TO BY THE LOWER
HOUSE OF THE CONVOCATION OF CANTERBURY

On the 5th July, 1904.

We are agreed:—

- I. That it is not desirable under present circumstances to restore the Order either of Readers or of Sub-deacons as a minor Order in the Church of England.
- II. That it is not desirable under present circumstances to restore the title of Sub-deacon in this country as the name of the holder of a distinct Office in the Church.
- III. That, accepting as our basis the draft form of licence issued by the bishops in 1866, the resolutions on Readers of the Convocation of Canterbury of 1884, and the Resolutions on Diocesan Readers of the Convocation of York of 1889, we consider it expedient to make further regulations as to the admission, status, and functions of Readers and of Catechists specially trained in the art of teaching, and to give sanction, under certain conditions, and with lawful authority, to their employment, under exceptional circumstances, in consecrated buildings.
- IV. That, accepting as our basis the resolutions on Lay Evangelists adopted by the Convocation of Canterbury in 1898, we consider it desirable to give to them a sanction similar to that given to Readers.
- V. That no Diocesan or Parochial Reader, Catechist, Evangelist, or other Lay Officer of the Church, or any other person, should be permitted to read any part of Divine Service (except the lessons) or to preach or give an address in consecrated or licensed Churches without the licence or permission of the Ordinary; and that the same rule should apply to the appointed services of the Church publicly performed in other buildings.
- VI. That such licence or permission should not be granted without—
 - (A) Adequate testimony to character, proved fitness for the ministry to which the Lay officer is licensed, commissioned, or otherwise appointed, evidence of soundness in the faith, and sufficient knowledge of the Scriptures and of the Book of Common Prayer;

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Act of Uniformity Amendment Bill (1905.)

This Bill, which has been drafted under the instructions of the Bishop of Salisbury, is now circulated by him for the purpose of its consideration by Members of Convocation and of the Houses of Laymen, so that he may ascertain what support it would have if it were introduced into Parliament. Its objects are:—

- (1) To make it easier for Sunday Services to be held in such a way that the benefit of the Psalms and Lessons, and other elements of Morning Prayer, shall not be lost by those who wish to make the Holy Communion the principal Sunday service.
- (2) To relieve those who feel a difficulty as to the recitation of the Athanasian Creed on certain of the most joyous and popular festivals of the year.
- (3) To give such powers and to establish such control as to special and additional Services as may lead to their all being brought under rule.

Salisbury, 8th February, 1905.

A Bill entitled An Act to Amend the Act of Uniformity Amendment Act, 1872.

BE it enacted by the King's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same as follows:

1. This Act may be cited for all purposes as the Act of Uniformity Amendment Act, 1905, and this Act and the Act of Uniformity Amendment Act, 1872, may be cited together as the Act of Uniformity Amendment Acts, 1872—1905, and shall be construed as one, as amended by this Act.

2. The use of the Shortened Order for Morning Prayer under Section 2 of the Act of Uniformity Amendment Act, 1872, and specified in the Schedule thereto, may be extended to Sundays and the four holy days hitherto excepted in the before-mentioned Act, and to Cathedrals as well as to churches, but in the case both of Cathedrals and churches only whenever a celebration of the Lord's Supper or Holy Communion follows immediately after the said Shortened Order.

3. Section 3 of the before-mentioned Act shall be read as if the following words were added at the end of the Section:—"or is not in entire conformity with the teaching of the Holy Scriptures or Book of Common Prayer. If any question be raised as to the extent of this conformity, appeal shall be to the Archbishop of the Province in accordance with the directions of the paragraphs in the Preface to the Book of Common Prayer, entitled *Concerning the Service of the Church*, and the decision of the said Archbishop shall be final and binding in law."

4. After the words in Section 4 of the before-mentioned Act, "anything except anthems and hymns which does not form part of the Holy Scriptures or Book of Common Prayer," the said section shall be read as if the following words were added:—"or is not in entire conformity with the teaching of the Holy Scriptures or Book of Common Prayer," and the provision for appeal to the Archbishop as is made in Section 3 of this Act shall have effect for the purposes of this Section as if it were here re-enacted.

5. Upon all occasions where the Order for Morning Prayer is followed immediately by a celebration of the Lord's Supper or Holy Communion, it shall be lawful to omit the Creed, otherwise appointed to be recited in the course of the Order for Morning Prayer, and the two final prayers of the Shortened Order for Morning Prayer, and to proceed at once after the third *Collect for Grace*, with or without the interposition of an Anthem or Hymn, to the Order for the Administration of the Holy Communion.

6. In the title of the "Shortened Order for Morning Prayer" in the Schedule of the before-mentioned Act, all words after "daily throughout the year" shall be omitted.

- (B) Written assent to the doctrine of the Church of England as contained in the Book of Common Prayer and of the Ordering of Bishops, Priests and Deacons, as being agreeable to the word of God ;
- (c) A written promise to conform in his ministry to such regulations as are or may be laid down by the Bishop of the Diocese, to act in obedience to the Incumbent of any parish in which he ministers, and to give up the form of licence if required to do so by the Bishop.

VII. That licence to preach in consecrated buildings should not be granted without the same assent to the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion, as is required of the Clergy, in accordance with the Act of Uniformity of 1662, and the Clerical Subscription Act of 1865 and Canon 36 as amended in the same year.

VIII. That admission to all these offices be in the same form, and that the difference between the duties of the offices be expressed in the terms of the licence or commission granted to Diocesan Readers, Parochial Readers, Catechists, and Evangelists respectively, the term "commission" being restricted to the case of Diocesan Readers, Catechists, and Evangelists.

IX. That a common form of admission be prepared and prescribed consisting chiefly of appropriate questions and prayers, with a delivery of the New Testament, as a sign of admission to office, but without any imposition of hands.

X. That it is expedient that these Resolutions, in the form in which they are accepted by Convocation, should be referred to the Representative Church Council for its consideration, so that the representatives of both Provinces may, if possible, come to some united decision on the subject at no distant date.

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